

**Response & Amendment
U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/256,647**

REMARKS

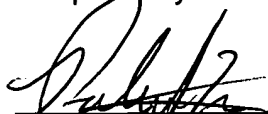
Claims 1-9 and 16-23 are pending in the subject application: claims 10-15 have been cancelled, and new claim 23 (23/16) has been added. Favorable consideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested in the view of the following remarks.

In response to the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action of March 27, 2001, Applicant hereby elects without traverse that which is designated as "Invention I", to which claims 1-9 and 16-23 are drawn. New claim 23 depends from independent claim 16 as is therefore within the definition of Invention I set forth by the Examiner. Support is found for claim 23 in the specification.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to find the application to be in condition for allowance with claims 1-9 and 16-23. However, if for any reason, the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Filed concurrently herewith is a Petition (with payment) for an Extension of Time of Three Months. Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 05-0460.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick J. Finnan
Registration No. 39,189

EPSTEIN, EDELL, SHAPIRO, FINNAN & LYTLE, LLC
1901 Research Boulevard, Suite 400
Rockville, Maryland 20850
(301) 424-3640
Hand-Delivered: September 27, 2001